

Buffalo Women's Law Journal

Volume 8

Article 5

9-1-1999

Remarks at Women's Conference Luncheon

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Erie County Family Court

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Recommended Citation

Mix, Marjorie Creola (1999) "Remarks at Women's Conference Luncheon," *Buffalo Women's Law Journal*: Vol. 8 , Article 5.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/bwlj/vol8/iss1/5>

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LAMPLIGHTERS AND BEACONS

Erie County Family Court Judge Marjorie Creola Mix was elected in 1993, after serving as Hearing Examiner in that Court since 1988. After a career in higher education Judge Mix engaged in private law practice and consulted in the public sector. She holds a Ph.D. and has served in various teaching and administrative positions with the State University of New York at Buffalo including Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Law and Jurisprudence. She was a Founding Member, Director and Vice President of the American Association of University Administrators.

Judge Mix was appointed in 1988 as a member of the Eighth Judicial District Panel on Women in the Courts, and has chaired the Panel since 1993. She has published articles on educational policy and lectured widely on various Family Court related topics. The following is a segment of her remarks regarding celebrating "WOMEN IN THE LAW-PAST AND PRESENT".

REMARKS: WOMEN IN THE LAW LUNCHEON

BY: JUDGE MARJORIE CREOLA MIX

There are many landscapes through which we travel throughout our lives. But as I reviewed the brief and limited history of women in the law, I was struck repeatedly by an image of the setting through which women lawyers and judges have traveled as they took their individual steps to pierce the darkness, and to paraphrase Eleanor Roosevelt's words "not to curse it, but to light their own lamps."

In the 1860's, the University of Iowa Admitted women to its law school. In

1873, Myra Bradwell was not permitted the right to practice law for she was, according to the U.S. Supreme Court, not protected by the privileges and immunities clause which Myra argued, should entitle her to appear in the courts.

In 1886, Kate Stoneman was admitted to practice in N.Y. State by successfully lobbying the state legislature to enact the necessary statute.

Through this dark Landscape, there appeared a few modest flickers of light through woods of men-only institutions of courts, bar associations, law schools and law firms. About the same time as Buffalo was beginning to be identified as the "City of Light," a few lamplighters began to blaze trails through that almost impermeable and unwelcoming terrain, marking their passage and showing the way for those who came after.

In 1897 Cecil Weiner and Helen Z. M. Rogers entered the University at Buffalo Law School. The class picture, in 1899 shows them among 30 men, their classmates. They were law school graduates, but not citizens. In 1931, when running for judge of the Children's Court, Weiner said, "If I can stand as well as the rest of the ticket, the next time a women wants to run for a public office in Erie County, her way be a little easier." She was elected in 1932. Her Classmate Helen Z.M.-Zadie- Rogers, first in her class in law school, she became an activist to sit on juries. She was named "representative-at-courage", years of service and civic and social worker which recommended her. Even if her qualifications as a lawyer were not first among

her credentials, she was lighting the path.

Sadie Rodgers was the first woman to argue an appeal before the New York State Court of Appeals and to preside over a New York State Constitutional Convention.

While still a child, Madge Taggart told classmates in 1908 that she fully intended to become a judge. In 1920, she graduated from law school and in 1952, she became the first woman judge in Buffalo City Court- Judge Madge Taggart.

In 1924, Marie T. Scalzo, then 26 years old, began a career as NYS Deputy Attorney General. As the first woman in its fraud prevention bureau, she dealt with business and commerce; not only "people law," but property as well.

Winifred Stanley, who later became a judge, was a 1933 graduate and the first woman assistant district attorney in New York State. When she went to Congress in 1942, again as a representative at large and by appointment, her legal work in patent and civil service was highly respected.

Jury service for women finally came after her term. It was no coincidence that the war then changed the landscape. Rosie the Riveter could, if qualified, also go to law school in greater numbers since men were away in the service.

But soon after, with the GI Bill, Legal Education closed down and classes of 150 in the Early 50's had, at the most, eight women. A friend, Sue Gardner, tells of applying for admission to Harvard Law School in those years and of being summoned

by the Dean of Admissions. As “you realize I’m sure”, he said, “that your coming here would take a man’s place in class.” She reflected and declined. In the 70’s when the landscape grew brighter and law schools opened their doors to anyone qualified regardless of race, sex or gender, and classes grew to current levels of one half women, she went to law school. She continues to practice.

We are not the first; we follow, but we would do well to remember. When we take time as we do today to recognize the beacons of light, whom are here to celebrate and who reflect on all of us, we remember with honor the Lamplighters who showed the way.

Government

Alfreda Slominski	Held various elected offices and first Erie County Comptroller
Sara Naples	Corporation Counsel, City of Buffalo
Mary Sickmon	Clerk in Federal district Court, Western District of New York
Margaret Hezel	Headed the Attorney General’s Office in Western New York
Barbara Kavanagh	Buffalo City Counsel/ now heads WNY Attorney General’s
Office	
Carol McCormick Crosswell Smith	First Woman Lawyer on the United Nations Staff

Bench

Ruth Vogel	First Woman Judge, Tonawanda City Court
Catherine Rowley Lautz	First Woman Judge, North Tonawanda City Court
Betsey Hurley	First Woman Judge, Lockport City Court
Elloeen Oughterson	Administrative Judge, Workers Compensation Board
Rose Lamendola	First Woman on County Court Bench in NY State, First Woman
	Supervising Judge, Erie County Court
Hon. Ann Mikoll	Appellate Division, 3 rd Department
Carol Heckman	First Woman U.S. Magistrate, Western District of NY
Judith Claire	First Woman Family Court Judge, Chautauqua County
Mary Ann Killeen	First Woman Supervising Judge, Erie County Family Court
Barbara Merriweather Simms	First African American Woman to graduate from U.B. Law
	School, First Woman on Buffalo City Court Bench
Debra Givens	First African American Woman Family Court Hearing Examiner
Amy Jo Fricano	First Woman County Court Judge, Niagara County

Private & Corporate Practice

Lillian E.G. Cowan

Diane Bennett

Linda Nenni

Grace Marie Ange

Bella Mazel

Guide and Mentor

President Hodgson Russ Andrews Woods & Goodyear LLP
Women's TAP Fund

Corporate Counsel/Kaleida Health Care

Private practitioner, leader in matrimonial practice

Partner, Cohen & Lombardo

Non-lawyers

Patricia Siracuse

Captain Marion Bass

Crystal Pelletier

Sheriff's Department/leader in Domestic Violence Education

Police officer, City of Buffalo

Deputy Police Commissioner, City of Buffalo

Other

Rose Lamendola & Clara Taylor

Judy Scales Trent

Vivian Garcia

First women's law firm

First Woman African American Professor, UB Law School

First Woman Hispanic Assistant Dean, U.B. Law School

